

# WORLD WAR TWO STUDIES ASSOCIATION

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## NEWSLETTER

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## General Information

Established in 1967 "to promote historical research in the period of World War II in all its aspects," the World War Two Studies Association, whose original name was the American Committee on the History of the Second World War, is a private organization supported by the dues and donations of its members. It is affiliated with the American Historical Association, with the International Committee for the History of the Second World War, and with corresponding national committees in other countries, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and the Vatican.

## The Newsletter

The WWTSA issues a semiannual newsletter, which is assigned International Standard Serial Number [ISSN] 0885-5668 by the Library of Congress. Back issues of the *Newsletter* are available from Robin Higham, WWTSA Archivist, through Sunflower University Press, 1531 Yuma (or Box 1009), Manhattan, KS 66502-4228.

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## Annual Membership Dues

Membership is open to all who are interested in the era of the Second World War. Annual membership dues of \$15.00 are payable at the beginning of each calendar year. Students with U.S. addresses may, if their circumstances require it, pay annual dues of \$5.00 for up to six years. There is no surcharge for members abroad, but it is requested that dues be remitted directly to the secretary of the WWTSA (not through an agency or subscription service) in U.S. dollars. The *Newsletter*, which is mailed at bulk rates within the United States, will be sent by surface mail to foreign addresses unless special arrangements are made to cover the cost of airmail postage.

## News & Notes

### WWTSA Activities at the American Historical Association Meeting, January 2001

The World War Two Studies Association annual business meeting convened on Friday, January 5, 2001, at the Boston Marriott Copley Place Hotel. WWTSA Secretary-Treasurer Mark Parillo called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

The first order of business was the officers' reports. As treasurer, Parillo reported continued solvency for the association, noting that the calendar year 2000 had seen the association catch up on dues to the international group (International Committee on the History of the Second World War) and continue to build a small reserve of funds in the Friends of the World War Two Studies Association account established for the WWTSA with the Kansas State University Foundations. That reserve, largely the result of donations by our members, now totals several hundred dollars.

The WWTSA secretary's report began with grateful acknowledgment to Professor Mark Stoler of the University of Vermont for presenting a paper on behalf of the American group at the 2000 meeting of the ICHSWW. The secretary also expressed deep appreciation for the permission to reissue, in the Fall 2000 *Newsletter*, the fine bibliographical essay by Dick Van Galen Last, which had initially appeared in the special double issue of the ICHSWW Bulletin (No. 30/31 – 1999/2000), which also carried Professor Stoler's paper.

Next there were some announcements. First, attention was called to the WWTSA-sponsored scholarly session to be held the following morning, titled "Racing Time: World War II and Oral History." Parillo then reported on the recent meeting in Oslo.

The quinquennial meeting of the International Committee for the Second World War was held in Oslo, Norway, in August 2000, concurrently with the International Congress of Historical Sciences. For the symposium on "The Second World War in Twentieth-Century History," Professor Mark A. Stoler of the University of Vermont prepared a paper on "The Second World War in American History and Memory." At the business meeting two new officers were selected for five-year terms ending in 2005. Gerhard Hirschfeld, Director of the Library of Contemporary History in Stuttgart, Germany, was elected president of the ICHSWW, succeeding the British historian David Dilks, who had served as president since 1992; and Henry Rousso's successor as secretary general of the ICHSWW is Pieter Lagrou, a colleague of his at the French institute for contemporary history at Cachan near Paris. Peter Romijn of the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation is continuing as treasurer of the ICHSWW, and Donald S. Detwiler, chairman of the WWTSA, and Oleg A. Rzheshvsky, president of the Russian Association of Second World War Historians, are continuing as vice-presidents of the ICHSWW.

New business included presentation of proposals by Professor Oleg A. Rzheshvsky of the Russian Academy of Science in Moscow, President of the Russian Association of Second World War Historians. The proposals were conveyed

from Dr. Rzheshesky by Dr. Mikhail Y. Myagkov, currently a fellow of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Visiting Scholars in Washington, D.C. The first was a proposal for a conference to be jointly sponsored by the WWTSA and the Russian Association of Second World War Historians, to be held in Moscow under the auspices of the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Science, in 2002, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the 11 June 1942 Roosevelt-Molotov agreement. The Russians also proposed that our two associations conclude a collaborative agreement regarding long-term cooperation, including a commitment to exchange books or review copies, up to perhaps ten titles per year (with the regular publication of concisely annotated bibliographies, with up to a half page per title), with coverage of the Russian books in the American newsletter and of American books in the Russian bulletin. The reaction to the proposals was a recommendation to canvass for volunteers willing to represent the U.S. committee in these matters.

It was next noted that the WWTSA is encouraging proposals for sessions to be held in conjunction with the 2002 AHA meeting, which will take place from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2002 in San Francisco. Members were reminded that WWTSA-sponsored sessions do not need to pass through the AHA program committee, that membership in the AHA or payment of conference registration fees are not necessary for participation in or attendance at these sessions, and that we may sponsor as few or as many sessions as we like. Members should feel free to contact the association secretary with ideas for sessions or papers. It was also mentioned that it is not too early to begin planning for possible

sessions for the AHA meetings in 2003, to be held at the Chicago Hilton and Palmer House Hilton on 2-5 January, and in 2004, at the Marriott Wardman Park and Omni Shoreham hotels in Washington, D.C., on 8-11 January, as well as for next year's meeting at the San Francisco Hilton (Renaissance Parc 55) and Hotel Nikko, 3-6 January.

Parillo reminded those present that the option exists to hold meetings and scholarly sessions in conjunction with two other organizations, particularly given that next year's AHA meeting will be held on the west coast. The last time this occurred, the association held its annual business meeting in conjunction with the Society for Military History at their April meeting. That possibility still exists. In addition, The Historical Society has expressed an interest in building closer ties with our organization. Their next national meeting is scheduled for Boston in May 2002. There being no further business from the floor, the meeting adjourned.

The following morning, Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup> the World War Two Studies Association sponsored a scholarly session. Dr. Jeffrey Grey of the Australian Defence Forces Academy and currently Horner Professor of Military Theory at Marine Corps University in Quantico, chaired the session. Dr. Ron Marcello of the University of North Texas presented "Creating World War II Oral History Archives." He was followed by Mr. Timothy Frank of Kansas State University, who presented "Recounted Valor: Interviews with Medal of Honor Recipients." Dr. Lawrence Yates of the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, next gave a paper titled "Using Oral History in Writing Official Histories: One Historian's

Experience.” Next, Professor Grey provided commentary on the individual papers and the session theme. The session was well attended despite the inclement weather, and

a lively general discussion followed the presentations by the panelists. Informal discussion continued well after the session officially ended.

**The German History of World War II (Volume V, Part 1):  
A Review Essay**

by  
**Donald S. Detwiler**

**Bernhard R. Kroener, Rolf-Dieter Müller, and Hans Umbreit, *Wartime Administration, Economy, and Manpower Resources, 1939-1941*, translated by John Brownjohn, Patricia Crampton, Ewald Osers, and Louise Willmot, transl. ed., Ewald Osers. Part I of *Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power, Volume V of Germany and the Second World War*, edited by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Research Institute for Military History), Potsdam, Germany. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. xlv & 1209 pp., with 90 figures, 39 maps, and an index of persons (ISBN 0-19-822887-2, \$215.00).**

The first three volumes of the projected ten-volume history of Germany in World War II from the German Defense Ministry's Research Institute for Military History, reviewed in the fall 1996 issue of this newsletter, dealt with the background of the conflict and with its course through 1941, except for the attack on the Soviet Union. That campaign was covered through the end of 1941 by the fourth volume, which was reviewed in the fall 1999 issue.<sup>1</sup> As Wilhelm Deist notes in his introduction to Volume V/1, reviewed here, the first four volumes in the series carry "the account of political and military developments" to December 1941, when the Red Army's success in repulsing the Wehrmacht as it approached Moscow coincided with Japanese attacks on American and British holdings in Asia and the Pacific, followed by German and Italian declarations of war on the United States--a widening of the European conflict into a global contest that represents "a deep caesura in the course of the war, a point at which it may be useful once more, from a different perspective, to examine the circumstances under which the Wehrmacht's successes had been achieved."<sup>2</sup>

Departing from the narrative approach in Volumes I-IV, in which the course of events is traced in one theater of the war after another, Volume V of the Military Research Institute's history of Germany and World War II is a structural study, in historical context, of the organization and mobilization of Germany, the Greater German Reich, and Hitler's Fortress Europe, focussing on the Third Reich's administration of Germany and occupied Europe, the planning and direction of its war economy, and its manpower management (including prisoner-of-war and slave-labor exploitation) from the beginning of the war to the end. This monumental and in many ways definitive work was published in two tomes totaling 2175 pages: the first appeared in German in 1988 and, in 2000, in the English translation reviewed here; the second (in which each of the three authors carries his account to the end of the war) appeared in German in 1999.<sup>3</sup>

**Part I: "Towards Continental Domination"** (pp. 9-404), by Hans Umbreit, is a book-length monograph on the German administration of the territories annexed or occupied from March 1938 to December 1941: Austria in spring 1938; the Sudetenland in fall 1938; Bohemia,

Moravia, and the Memel area in spring 1939; Danzig and western Poland in fall 1939; Denmark, Norway, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Belgium, and much of France in 1940; and parts of the

Balkans, the rest of Poland, the Baltic states, and much of the Soviet Union in 1941. Umbreit shows that German policy in these occupied territories differed greatly, depending upon the place they were to take in Hitler's "New Order."<sup>4</sup> This is illustrated in the difference in latitude afforded the German military commander in Belgium, Alexander von Falkenhausen, and his counterpart in France, Otto von Stülpnagel. "By means of skilful reporting and diplomatic manoeuvring Falkenhausen succeeded in avoiding major interference by his superiors. Stülpnagel in Paris, on the other hand, not only enjoyed less flexibility but also less scope. France's greater political importance, combined with the mistrust which not only Hitler harboured of the 'traditional enemy', caused German responses to armed resistance to turn out somewhat more nervous and brutal. . . . Although Stülpnagel [in late 1941] was still avoiding the demanded reprisal of [up to] 100 hostages to be shot for every German soldier killed, this got him into a difficult position with Hitler."<sup>5</sup> While "Hitler believed solely in deterrence, regarding clemency as mistaken and political considerations as unnecessary," Stülpnagel exercised some restraint, on the basis of an understanding with the commander-in-chief of the German Army, Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch, who did not regard the order on reprisals from the High Command of the Armed Forces (OKW) to be absolutely binding. But after Brauchitsch's dismissal in December 1941, the chief of the OKW, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel "revoked that concession," . . . and "Stülpnagel requested, and was granted, relief from his post as he could no longer justify the reprisals expected of him before his conscience or before history. By this step, however, he opened the road to the appointment of a senior SS and police leader on 1 June 1942, to whom the military administration had to hand over a large part of its responsibilities. By then, just on 500 hostages had been shot by the Germans."<sup>6</sup>

Umbreit concludes his final chapter, "Collaboration and Resistance," as follows: "By the end of 1941, . . . the Germans found themselves unable effectively to check the counter-propaganda issuing from the resistance, the espionage and sabotage, or the attacks on German personnel. Even less were the occupiers able to suppress the partisan movement in the Balkans or in the rear of the eastern front. Each day the Germans had to acknowledge that they had not entirely succeeded in pacifying the occupied territories and that a new front had come into existence within their sphere of power, a front which their over-extended forces were no longer adequate to fight. The leadership of the Third Reich did not realize that the main reason for this development was their own occupation policy. Instead of rethinking its programme and methods, it continued to rely on the stifling effect of brutal measures, which only served to provoke even greater resistance. It became not only a patriotic but also a moral duty to prevent a German continental domination which was based on utterly inhuman and criminal foundations."<sup>7</sup>

**Part II, "The Mobilization of the German Economy for Hitler's War Aims"** (pp. 405-786), by Rolf-Dieter Müller, opens with the observation that from September 1939 through 1941, prior to Albert Speer's appointment as armaments minister, the German economy was not fully mobilized in support of the war effort. Müller goes on to write: "The question that arises from this--why the reserves of productivity that facilitated Speer's 'armaments miracle'

from 1942 onwards should have lain fallow during the early years of the war--is one to which the British economic historian Alan S. Milward has supplied an answer currently endorsed by almost all authorities. It is twenty years since Milward formulated his 'blitzkrieg economy' theory, which attributed the German war economy's low level of mobilization until the end of 1941 to a brilliant stroke of economic policy on Hitler's part. . . . According to Milward, a blitzkrieg economy was the only 'correct' and possible economic strategy whereby the plan for a lightning military campaign could be fulfilled by administering suitable--and skillfully controlled--doses of economic resources with due regard to prevailing political, social, and economic conditions."<sup>8</sup>

This interpretation, writes Müller, would make it understandable that, following "the immense rearmament drive in progress from 1933 onwards," Hitler was able to escape "the mounting pressure of economic bottlenecks . . . and . . . to avoid placing additional burdens on his own people. . . . Given the limited mobilization of his own resources, most of the resources needed for a series of brief campaigns had to be obtained by exploiting prospective territorial conquests. War was to be nourished by war."<sup>9</sup>

In his meticulously documented study, Müller reconstructs the organization, planning, and implementation of Germany's economic mobilization from the beginning of the war (dovetailing with the treatment of the prewar period by his colleagues Hans-Erich Volkmann and Wilhelm Deist in the first volume of the series<sup>10</sup>), convincingly demonstrating that the "partial" or "transitional" mobilization of German resources from September 1939 through the end of 1941 was not brought about by deliberate planning, but by the diffuse decision-making structure of the National Socialist regime that lacked, before 1942, the central authority and overview to coordinate the degree of economic mobilization that Germany had achieved in World War I.

On the eve of the invasion of Poland, Hitler issued a decree investing a "Ministerial Council for the Defence of the Reich," under the chairmanship of Hermann Göring, "with supreme authority to co-ordinate matters relating to the war economy." However, as Umbreit writes, Göring was "devoid of the personal interest and ability required to institute a well-planned economic policy."<sup>11</sup> The deficiencies of the system in place at the beginning of the war became disturbingly clear by the end of the Polish campaign, which "the Wehrmacht had sustained . . . largely out of its existing stocks and with only slender reserves of war material."<sup>12</sup> Not only was the level of munitions production so low in the fall of 1939 that it would take considerable time to build up the stocks needed to undertake further large-scale operations, but the delivery of spare parts to service the equipment of the mobile units that had played a crucial role in the Polish campaign had caused serious delays in the production of new vehicles.<sup>13</sup> By spring 1940 the evident need for coordination led Hitler to appoint as minister of armaments Dr. Fritz Todt, the civil engineer who, as "construction manager of the Third Reich," had supervised the building of dual-lane highways and, more recently, of fortifications along the Franco-German border (the *Westwall*). When Hitler appointed Todt to his new post and issued the executive orders establishing his ministry of munitions, Müller writes, "he also informed the commanders-in-chief of his decision in regard to conflicts of interest. In future, the OKW was to collate the three services' requisitions and submit them to Todt. If these provoked differences of opinion and impinged on other armaments programmes, Todt and Keitel would jointly seek a ruling from Hitler himself . . . However, Hitler reassured Keitel that Todt was to function purely as an industrial

'slave-driver' and had been instructed not to create any new institutions."<sup>14</sup> From the beginning, however, Todt was "taking a different tack," as Müller shows in detail. For example, "a few days before the western offensive began he made a final attempt to reach at least a practical compromise by setting up committees to review the placing of orders, the manufacture of propellants and explosives, acceptance procedures, price controls, and metal quotas. The industrialists, officers, and engineers who sat on these committees were jointly to work out new solutions. To enforce agreement, Todt took a hand in their deliberations himself . . . The committees that accomplished most were those whose industrial representatives firmly seized the reins . . . . The price-control committee, in particular, broke new ground thanks to Todt's acknowledgement of the profit principle . . . . The armaments minister introduced a mixed System of traditional cost-plus and fixed prices of the sort that had proved beneficial during the construction of the Westwall. Fixed prices gave industrialists the financial scope and incentive to maximize profits by means of rationalization, but there was still no complete relaxation of the restrictive pricing policy. This was accomplished two years later--and with notable success--by Speer, Todt's successor."<sup>15</sup>

By the eve of the German attack on the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, the "army had almost trebled in size since the outbreak of war, but its arms and equipment had only doubled, and the navy and the Luftwaffe had recorded even smaller growth rates." But Hitler's surprisingly swift successes against Poland in September 1939 and against the Western Powers the following spring, together with his underestimation of the tenacity and resources of the Soviet Union, contributed to "his certainty that the Wehrmacht would be able to topple the 'clay colossus' in the east by means of a lightning campaign'."<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the attack on the USSR was launched without the reserve forces and supplies that had been available to the German Army for its offensive in the West the previous spring. In contrast to May 1940, when the German field army invading France and the Low Countries had been backed up by a considerable number of operational reserves, the army that invaded Russia "in the summer of 1941, despite its increase in size, . . . was forced to enter the campaign virtually without reserve formations."<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the supply of equipment for the forces that invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 was "fully assured for around three months only."<sup>18</sup>

In the second half of 1941, "the collapse of the military command economy was becoming increasingly visible . . . . At the beginning of 1942 this development accelerated as a result of the unbridgeable rivalries within the Wehrmacht. The Army High Command seemed determined to bring about a switch of power in armament policy at the expense of the Wehrmacht High Command, in order to emulate the navy and the Luftwaffe in gaining greater autonomy in matters of armaments. Everything therefore initially moved towards conflict between the OKH and the OKW. The result, writes Müller, referring to the rise of Todt and his successor, Speer, "was the loss of military primacy in the armaments economy and the rise of the civilian minister of armaments to become the new 'dictator' of the war economy."<sup>19</sup> The grave German reverses at the outskirts of Moscow in December 1941, which led Hitler to assume personal command of the army, dismissing Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch as commander-in-chief, also brought to a head the critical need for a drastic overhaul in the German war economy, and with it open confrontation between Armaments Minister Todt and Reich Marshal Hermann Göring, who, apart from his role as commander-in-chief of the Air Force, controlled vital areas of the economy

through the Four-Year Plan, particularly manpower management.<sup>20</sup> On 7 February 1942, Todt flew to Hitler's headquarters to seek Hitler's approval of his "overall concept of the reorganization of the war economy." On the basis of what is known about the two men's conference, Müller reports: "Even though Hitler evidently could not quite avoid reducing at least some of Göring's powers and lending support to Todt, he hesitated to commit himself in the matter of a 'manpower dictator', a question closely tied up with [National- Socialist] Party interests. It appears that the problem of overall direction of armaments likewise remained unresolved. . . . Todt at least wrested from Hitler a few rulings which presumably, in line with his inclination, he would have preferred to put off or avoid by compromising. The talks concluded on 7 February 1942, with exhaustion and irritation on both sides. While his aeroplane was taking off the following morning, there was an explosion and Todt lost his life."<sup>21</sup>

Regarding Todt's death and its sequel, Müller writes that "the cause of the 'accident' was instantly raised by Hitler himself and has frequently been discussed since. An investigation by the Luftwaffe speedily concluded that sabotage could be ruled out. Nor was any evidence of an attempt on Todt's life discovered subsequently. . . . Hitler himself, at any rate, later pointed out that Todt had to lose his life in a disaster for armaments to be stepped up. Besides, he rejected the findings of the investigation into the causes of the accident and personally dictated the official version, according to which the pilot had inadvertently operated the aircraft's self-destruct mechanism. Any further discussion was expressly forbidden by Hitler."<sup>22</sup>

Noting that "speculations about an assassination order point not only to Hitler and the SS, but also to the last serious rival blocking Todt's rise--Göring," Müller writes that ". . . immediately upon the news of the accident the Reich Marshal hurried to the Führer to declare himself ready to take over Todt's tasks for his Four-year Plan. However, Göring found Hitler already with Todt's designated successor, Albert Speer . . . . Speer, Hitler's favourite architect and builder, commissioner for the Luftwaffe's armaments constructions, and director of a construction staff for repairs to southern Russian railway installations, had every right to hope that at least the most important technical tasks and offices of Todt would come his way. However, the fact that Hitler entrusted him with Todt's entire legacy clearly suggests that Hitler intended at all costs to maintain the change of direction in the war economy and to avoid a relapse into the old tiresome intrigues and rivalries."<sup>23</sup>

However, the crucial point clearly brought out by Müller is that the stage had been set by Todt for a new approach to economic mobilization, after "the military armaments bureaucracy" had demonstrated that it was incapable of taking charge of the war economy and directing it "in line with the objectives and requirements of the Wehrmacht . . . , [due to] the pressure of insuperable conflicts within the Wehrmacht and the patent weakness of the military instruments of direction. The new wave of mobilization of the German war economy came from within industry itself promoted and steered by the [new] armaments minister [Speer], whose advance through the jungle of war-economy competences and agencies seemed irresistible. [The mandate that he received from] . . . Hitler on 8 February 1942 heralded the breakthrough of the new system of planning and steering the war economy, the signal for the seizure of power by the civilian armaments ministry and its industrial organization. The end of an autocratic, conspicuously failed military armaments bureaucracy and of the primacy of the Wehrmacht in the war economy

was beginning to take shape.”<sup>24</sup> The first steps in its reshaping are recounted and analyzed in Müller’s concluding subchapter, “From Todt to Speer” (pp, 773-786), in which he concisely synthesizes his penetrating insights regarding Hitler’s role in the decision-making process in Germany and observes that Speer “bore in mind the lessons of the First World War and the then war office under [Dr. Walther] Rathenau.<sup>[25]</sup> Rathenau’s thesis that the exchange of technical know-how, the division of labour between one factory and another, and standardization rendered possible ‘a doubling of production with no increase in equipment and no increase in labour costs’ had been criminally neglected throughout two years of war.”<sup>26</sup>

**PART III: The Manpower Resources of the Third Reich in the Area of Conflict between Wehrmacht, Bureaucracy, and War Economy, 1939-1942**, by Bernhard R. Kroener (pp.

787-1140), a self-contained monograph, like each of the two previous parts of this volume, is a study of manpower management that provides a detailed and meticulously documented account, extensively illustrated and elucidated by well-captioned tables, charts, graphs, and map sketches, of German manpower management from the beginning of the war to the winter crisis of 1941-42 (an account continued to the end of the war in the second part of the fifth volume in the German series, which has yet to be translated).

Kroener takes as his point of departure Germany’s experience in the First World War, reviewing the lessons of that conflict and how they were viewed by those responsible for the planning and implementation of manpower policy before and during World War II. In its systematic treatment of population resources, mobilization planning, military recruitment and personnel policy, balancing the manpower requirements of industry and the armed forces (and the handling of exemptions from conscription), and the employment of foreign workers and prisoners of war in the armaments industry, Kroener’s study not only presents a coherent overview of German manpower management during the first half of the war, but also provides a detailed and statistically documented picture of the escalating impact of the war on the German people, and, as it continued and spread, on the other peoples of Europe who were drawn into the conflict and all too often ruthlessly exploited.<sup>27</sup>

The body of Kroener’s study complements Umbreit’s work on wartime administration and Müller’s on the war economy, for in his analysis of the first half of the war from the perspective of manpower management, he takes their findings into account, often bringing out previously unconsidered implications that emerge when they are considered from a demographic perspective. Moreover, in a concise introduction and in his concluding chapter, Kroener turns to the issue raised by Müller at the beginning of the second major segment of this volume, the question of whether and, if so, to what extent the early campaigns of the war can be considered to have been conducted according to a blitzkrieg strategy. Kroener initially defines this issue in what amounts to a five-page preface to his study, “Introduction: Blitzkrieg Strategy and Blitzkrieg Economy: The Genesis of a Concept” (pp. 789-793), and returns to it in his final chapter, “Blitzkrieg or Total War? Ideological and Political-Military Implications of the Reaction to the Trauma of the First World War” (pp. 1141-1154). In the last paragraph of his introduction, Kroener writes that “whereas for the United States and Great Britain demographic studies are already in existence, the question of the distribution of the whole German population and its physical and political capacities under wartime conditions has remained largely unanswered up

to now. Yet it is for precisely this area that the reality of the basic theories of Milward (organized blitzkrieg economy), [Timothy] Mason (internal crisis), and [Richard] Overy (inefficiency and incompetence) can be vividly illustrated.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, analysis of military deployments, economic policy, and manpower management, in the context of the examination of precisely defined economic, political, and social factors, can shed light on the extent to which a blitzkrieg strategy can be considered to have been employed from 1939 to the end of 1941. He reaches the following conclusions in the last two paragraphs of his study:

“The six great German offensive operations of the first half of the war can clearly be divided into three distinct types. The attacks on Poland and France were defined largely by the demand of the military for a level of manpower and material adequate to meet the operational objectives. At least in part, they were successful because some of the military ‘planners’ consciously acted against the domestic political interests of the National Socialist leadership, which had no precise idea of the duration of the respective campaigns. In contrast, the campaigns in Scandinavia, the Balkans, and Africa were no more than sectoral operations requiring a limited use of resources. Only the war in the east can be regarded as a planned--and failed--blitzkrieg. After the spectacular and unexpectedly easy victory over France, whose military strength was overestimated because of its tenacious resistance in the First World War, the German political and military leadership made a fatally over-optimistic assessment of its own capacities. The climate thus created encouraged ideas of a blitzkrieg. The concept was further advanced by the German assessment of the Soviet Union as an inferior foe, a view which owed more to irrational considerations than to rational knowledge. An almost classic blitzkrieg was prepared by the production of a precise timetable and an exact calculation of the limited use of German resources, based on an analysis of the resources thought to be available to the enemy. When this failed, the subjection of military principles of leadership to ideological assumptions was the almost inevitable result.

“The military leadership of the Third Reich was to pay dearly for its hubris in June 1940 and its subsequent acceptance of the blitzkrieg concept favoured by the regime. It paid with the belief that it had no choice but to continue to the bitter end the path it had taken, without the possibility of exerting any sustained influence on the course of events.”<sup>29</sup>

In the **Conclusion** of volume V/1 (pp. 1155-1170), signed by all three authors, they write that their work, “covering the period 1939-41, has revealed how greatly the Third Reich had overestimated its own strength in the endeavour to achieve a pre-eminent great-power and world-power status. At least in those aspects of the Second World War they have investigated, the authors have concluded that the end of the third year of war deserves to be regarded as a fundamental turning-point. This is true in more than a purely military sense. The increasingly apparent failure of the German Reich to establish a lasting hegemony over the European continent, and especially the original omissions in the mobilization of the country’s economic and manpower resources, presented the Germans with insoluble problems. Not even an intensified and more ruthless exploitation of the occupied territories, and some improvement in economic management within Germany, gave them any real chance of avoiding defeat . . . . Inevitably, the situation became even more desperate when the National Socialist rulers, despite their failure to achieve victory in the ‘European war’, refused to be deterred from a new world

war. For Hitler, and for all those who had already been guilty of the most appalling crimes at his command or on his authority, there was no way out. The war was prolonged with the most unscrupulous means, the number of victims ruthlessly multiplied.”<sup>30</sup>

They end their well-crafted conclusion, in which they convincingly synthesize the implications of many of the findings of their individual contributions, as follows:

“Several factors combined to convince contemporaries, and even those who came after, that the regime had adjusted flexibly and successfully to changing conditions in the first half of the war: the edge in armament enjoyed by Germany at the outbreak of the war, the lack of unity among its opponents, the fact that enemy resources of manpower and material were at first only partially mobilized, the abundance of war booty, and, finally, the pauses between campaigns which gave the troops an opportunity to replace their equipment and improve their combat strength.

“This conviction was not correct, as we have seen from the detailed analysis of three areas which were vital for the conduct of the war. It was only the coincidence of favourable external factors which gave the National Socialist regime considerable freedom of manoeuvre, at least until 1941. These conditions enabled it to evade the conditions and consequences of modern war and to build a stage for the illusion of the ‘greatest military leader of all time.’<sup>[31]</sup> Yet at the climax of his power, even before the official proclamation of total war, the writing was already on the wall.”<sup>32</sup>

**Bibliography, Index, Abbreviation List, and Glossary of Foreign Terms.**--The extensive bibliography (on pp. 1171-1200) lists archival as well as published sources. In cases where cited German works are available in English, translated editions are often (but unfortunately by no means always) listed, with publication data, in brackets.<sup>33</sup> On pp. 1201-1209 there is an index of personal names in which, as in the German edition, Hitler is unlisted. None of the numerous, useful, and clearly printed diagrams, graphs, tables, and maps appear in color, as do some in the original German edition, but the captions, labels, headings, and (where appropriate) place-names are translated into English. The front matter of the volume includes a twenty-page list of abbreviations and acronyms, in which words and phrases are spelled out in the original German and their English translation is given, followed by a one-page glossary of foreign terms. (The well-translated text of the volume is not unduly encumbered with untranslated terms or abbreviations, but many do occur in footnotes that readers who do not know German would not understand without the glossary and the list of abbreviations and acronyms.)

## Notes

1. Information on the German Defense Ministry’s Research Institute for Military History and on its projected ten-volume series on World War II will be found in the endnotes to the review of the first three volumes in the fall 1996 issue of this newsletter and the endnotes to the review of the fourth volume in the fall 1999 issue. Volume V, published in two parts, the translation of the first of which is reviewed here, originally appeared in Germany as *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg* [“Germany and the Second World War”], herausgegeben vom

Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt [edited by the Military History Research Office], Band [volume] 5: *Organisation und Mobilisierung des deutschen Machtbereichs* [“Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power”] von Bernhard R. Kroener, Rolf-Dieter Müller, und Hans Umbreit, Erster Halbband [first half volume], *Kriegsverwaltung, Wirtschaft und personelle Ressourcen, 1939-1941* [“War Administration, the Economy, and Personnel Resources, 1939-1941”], Zweiter Halbband [second half volume], *Kriegsverwaltung, Wirtschaft und personelle Ressourcen, 1942-1944/45* [“War Administration, the Economy, and Personnel Resources, 1942-1944/45”], (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1988 & 1999). The English translation of Volume VI, *The Global War, 1941-1943*, by Horst Boog, Werner Rahn, and Reinhard Stumpf, originally scheduled for publication in November 2000, is now to be published on 30 July 2001 (according to the Oxford University Press website < <http://www.oup-usa.org>>, as of February 2001); the publication announcement states that it is to be a 1300-page volume, ISSN 0198228880, tentatively priced at \$220.00. And no estimated date of publication is available for the original German editions (not to mention English translations) of the remaining volumes in the series, with the following working titles: vol. 7, *Das Deutsche Reich in der Defensive. Der Krieg im Westen und im Mittelmeerraum* [“The German Reich on the Defensive: The War in the West and in the Mediterranean Theater”]; vol. 8, *Das Deutsche Reich in der Defensive. Der Krieg im Osten und Südosten* [“The German Reich on the Defensive: the War in the East and the Southeast”]; vol. 9, *Staat und Gesellschaft im Kriege* [“State and Society during the War”]; and vol. 10, *Das Ende des Dritten Reiches* [“The End of the Third Reich”].

2. Loc. cit., p. 1. Dr. Deist, who wrote the eight-page introductory essay that opens Vol. V/1, is the author of “The Rearmament of the Wehrmacht,” pp. 373-540, in the opening volume of the series (Wilhelm Deist, Manfred Messerschmidt, Hans-Erich Volkmann, and Wolfram Wette, *The Build-up of German Aggression*, Volume I of *Germany and the Second World War*, edited by the Research Institute for Military History [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990]).

3. Note 1 above gives the full title and publication data for the 1195-page tome published in 1999 as the second part of the fifth volume. No date has been announced for the publication of an English translation.

4. “Not only did the administrations in the German-occupied sphere of power lack any uniformity, “ Umbreit writes, “but so did the internal structures of the occupation regimes as well as the designations of their officials, the extent of their independence, and the rights of their top representatives” (p. 129).

5. Ibid., p. 238, where the translation of the original German passage (loc. cit., p. 197), *bis zu 100* omits the not insignificant words *bis zu*, “up to” (inserted in brackets).

6. Ibid, pp. 238-240. Umbreit writes that “Otto von Stülpnagel was not an opponent of the regime or its policy, but he did not wish to take measures he regarded as useless, damaging, or downright wrong; he felt a responsibility before history and was not prepared to be made a scapegoat for a development which could not be halted either by clemency or by brutality--which indeed could only be accelerated by the latter, If anything could help, then, in his view, it was intensification of penal regulations and the methods of patient police work” (pp. 238-39). In

February 1942, Otto von Stülpnagel was relieved in Paris by his distant cousin Carl Heinrich von Stülpnagel, whose subsequent involvement in the resistance against Hitler led to his execution. For the relationship of the two cousins and biographical data on C. H. v. Stülpnagel, see footnote 3 on p. 591 of *Hitlers Lagebesprechungen. Die Protokollfragmente seiner militärischen Konferenzen 1942-1945*, edited by Helmut Heiber (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1962); a 971-page volume with the meticulously edited fragments of the only partially burned transcripts of Hitler's situation conferences from 1942 to the end of the war, with extensive annotations, including biographical summaries of the participants in the conferences (pp. 35-47) and of officers named in the surviving transcripts. (*Hitler Directs His War: The Secret Records of his Daily Conferences*, selected and edited by Felix Gilbert [New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1951], a volume of less than 200 pages, with translations only of selected segments of the transcripts that survived relatively intact, does not include among its annotations remotely comparable data from personnel records, not to mention numerous other explanatory footnotes.)

7. Loc. cit., p. 404.

8. Ibid., p. 407.

9. Ibid., pp. 407-408.

10. Hans-Erich Volkmann, "The National Socialist Economy in Preparation for War," Part II (pp. 157-372), and Wilhelm Deist, "The Rearmament of the Wehrmacht," Part III (pp. 373-540), in Wilhelm Deist, Manfred Messerschmidt, Hans-Erich Volkmann, and Wolfram Wette, *The Build-up of German Aggression*, translated by P. S. Falla, Dean S. McMurry, and Ewald Osers, Volume I of *Germany and the Second World War*, edited by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt [Research Institute for Military History], Freiburg im Breisgau (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

11. Ibid., p. 426. Göring already held considerable power over the German economy by virtue of his appointment by Hitler in September 1936 as plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan.

12. Ibid., p. 474.

13. Ibid. The bottleneck triggered by the need for replacement parts for vehicles damaged or worn down in the Polish campaign came as no surprise to the responsible officers in the German Army. On 31 August 1939, Colonel Adolf von Schell, in charge of army mechanization, predicted that "in a longer war much of the army would have to be demechanized. On 4 September, only a day after the Western powers entered the war, Schell distributed detailed plans for a demechanization of the army after the conclusion of operations against Poland" (ibid., p. 1144).

14. Ibid., p. 542.

15. Ibid., pp. 546-547.

16. Ibid., p. 638.

17. Ibid., p. 1151.

18. Ibid., p. 1150.

19. Ibid., p. 758. OKH is an abbreviation for *Oberkommando des Heeres* [High Command of the Army].

20. Ibid., p. 772.

21. Ibid., pp. 772-73.

22. Ibid., pp. 773-74

23. Ibid., p. 774. Other considerations aside, these “intrigues and rivalries” had led, at least indirectly, to the suicides first of the head of the Army Ordnance Office, General Karl Becker, in 1940 (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 489, 537, and 773), and then of the Director-General of Air Armaments, General Ernst Udet, in 1941 (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 608, 709, and 773).

24. Ibid., p. 773. The shape that the German war economy would take, and Speer’s role in the management of it from February 1942 to January 1945, is dealt with by Rolf-Dieter Müller in his continuation and conclusion of this study, “Albert Speer und die Rüstungspolitik im totalen Krieg [Albert Speer and Armament Policy in Total War],” published on pp. 275-773 of Volume V/2 in the German Military History Research Institute series on Germany in World War II, which, as explained at the beginning of this essay and in notes I and 3 above, appeared in German in 1999, but has yet to be translated and published in English.

25. Ibid., p. 780. The German-Jewish industrialist Dr. Walther Rathenau played a crucial role in the economic mobilization of Germany during World War I, served as minister of reconstruction in 1921, and was serving as foreign minister when he was assassinated in 1922.

26. The history of the German war economy from February 1942 to January 1945 and of Speer’s decisive role in its management is dealt with in “Albert Speer und die Rüstungspolitik im totalen Krieg [Albert Speer and Armament Policy in Total War],” the second half of Rolf-Dieter Müller’s definitive study, published on pp. 275-773 of Volume V/2 in the German Military History Research Institute’s series on Germany in World War II, which, as explained at the beginning of this essay and in endnotes 1 and 3 above, appeared in German in 1999.

27. By the autumn of 1941, some 1.2 million prisoners of war were employed in the German economy (*ibid.*, p. 1092).

28. Ibid., p. 793.

29. Ibid., pp. 1153-54.

30. Ibid., pp. 1155-56.

31. The German phrase that Goebbels not infrequently used to refer to Hitler's alleged military genius was "*der größte Feldherr aller Zeiten*," commonly translated into English as "the greatest warlord of all time." Before long, Hitler was being sarcastically referred to, off the record, of course, by a German acronym derived from Goebbels' florid phrase, as *der GRÖFAZ*.

32. Ibid., p. 1170.

33. To cite a couple of examples: Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters*, translated by R. H. Barry (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; New York: Praeger, 1964) should have followed, in brackets, the German citation. The same goes for Matthias Schmidt, *Albert Speer: The End of a Myth*, translated by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: St. Martin's, 1984). And readers of this volume would also have been better served had the bibliography listed the current edition in English of the standard reference by Jürgen Rohwer and Gerhard Hümmelchen, *Chronology of the War at Sea 1939-1945: The Naval History of World War Two*, second, revised, expanded edition (Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Institute Press, 1992) instead of the 1968 German edition.

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